

REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 23, 2004. Claims 11-14 and 29-52 were pending. Claims 1-10 and 15-28 were previously canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer. By this Amendment, Applicants have canceled claims 11, 12, 29-42 and 44-52, without prejudice or disclaimer, added new claims 53-60, and amended claims 13 and 14. Accordingly, claims 13, 14, 43 and 53-60 are now pending in the application, with claims 13, 43 and 60 being in independent form.

According to the Office Action, claims 11 and 14 are objected to as being identical.

It is Applicants' understanding based on a review of the claims that the objection is directed at claims 12 and 14.

In any event, by this Amendment, claims 11 and 12 have been canceled and claim 14 has been amended to depend from claim 13.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claims 11, 12, 14, 29, 31-39, 42 and 44-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as purportedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,624,526 to Tsukai in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,428,596 to Hineno et al. Claim 30 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Tsukai in view of Hineno and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,136,152 to Lee. Claims 40 and 41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Tsukai in view of Hineno and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,804,835 to Ando.

By this Amendment, Applicants have canceled claims 11, 12, 29-42 and 44-52, without prejudice or disclaimer.

Accordingly, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are now moot.

In addition, according to the Office Action, claim 43 is allowed

and claim 13 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this Amendment, Applicants have amended claim 13 to rewrite the claim into independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim (former claim 11).

Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to claim 13 is requested.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance in the Office Action and submit that claims 13 and 43 recite subject matter which further supports patentability for reasons in addition to those identified in the Reasons for Allowance.

Claim 14 depends directly from claim 13 which is thought to be patentably distinct over the cited art, and for at least the very same reasons that claim 13 is patentably distinct over the cited art, claim 14 is also submitted to be patentably distinct over the cited art.

New independent claim 60 is thought to be patentably distinct over the cited art for at least reasons similar to the reasons that claim 13 is patentably distinct over the cited art.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such a petition, and the Commissioner is authorized to charge the requisite fees to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

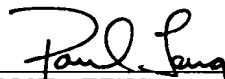
The Office is hereby authorized to charge any fees that may be required in connection with this amendment, and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this

application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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